

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05 TRSE-00 ICA-11
NSC-05 OES-07 OMB-01 AID-05 L-03 DODE-00 /075 W
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R 121232Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8470

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 3925

FOR ARA/AND/E; S/NM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, EC

SUBJECT: GOE WAR ON DRUGS -- AN UPDATE

REF: (A) STATE 145409; (B) QUITO 2833; (C) STATE 105570?
(D) QUITO 1815; (E) QUITO 1652; (F) QUITO A-5, JANUARY 31,
1978; (G) QUITO 0792

1. SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF EVENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE DURING THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS WHICH EITHER IMPACT ON OR ARE DRIECTLY RELATED TO THE GOE'S ANNOUNCED WAR ON DRUGS. THEY INCLUDE: THE DISMISSAL OF A NUMBER OF FIRST INSTANCE JUDGES ON GROUNDS OF NARCOTICS CORRUPTION; REMOVAL OF THE NPNS/INTERPOL CHIEF IN QUITO AND OF THE PLICE CHIEF IN GUAYAQUIL; THE RESIGNA-TION OF THE SUBSECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT; AND A HIGH-LEVEL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN STOPPING SHIPMENT OF DRUNGS ABOARD ECUADOREAN FLAG SHIPS. WHILE THE RESULT OF ALL OF THESE EVENTS WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE POSITIVE, AND THEY DO NOT ALL SEEM TO REFLECT AN UNALLOYED ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THEY ARE EVIDENCE THAT PRESI-DENT POVEDA'S COMMITMENT TO A WAR ON DRUGS WAS MORE THAN
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JUST RHETORIC. THE PERFORMANCE OF NEW JUDGES AND POLICE OFFICIALS OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS AND MONTHS WILL BEAR CLOSE SCRUTINY. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE PAST MONTH TWO JUDGES AND ONE DISTRICT ATTORNEY HAVE BEEN FIRED, AND THEMSELVES ARRESTED, OSTENSIBLY FOR INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS CORRUPTION. ONE JUDGE STANDS

ACCUSED OF PERMITTING THE RELEASE FROM PRISON OF ONE OF THE MAJOR TRAFFICKERS ARRESTED IN LATE APRIL (SEE REF. B -- A WARRANT IS NOW OUT FOR THE RE-ARREST OF THAT INDIVIDUAL). THE OTHERS WERE SIMPLY ACCUSED OF ACCEPTING PAYOFFS FROM TRAFFICKERS IN EXCHANGE FOR LOW OR NO SENTENCES. THE ACTION AGAINST THE JUDGE WHO RELEASED THE TRAFFICKER WAS ORDERED BY GEN. DURAN AFTER THE EMBASSY INFORMED SUBSECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT MANRIQUE OF THE RELEASE AND HE IN TURN INFORMED DURAN. THE ACTION AGAINST THE OTHER OFFICIALS WAS TAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT, WHICH HAS JURISDICTION OVER JUDICIAL HIRING AND FIRING. HIS ACTION APPEARS TO RESPOND TO THE COMMITMENT MADE BY THE FORMER SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT TO THE AMBASSADOR EARLIER THIS YEAR TO INSTITUTE CLOSE SUPREME COURT SCRUTINY OF ALL DRUG-RELATED CASES HANDLED ON LOWER LEVELS.

3. ON MAY 15, SUBSECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT JAVIER MANRIQUE SUDDENLY ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION. HE WAS REPLACED BY DR. ENRIQUE LEON, FORMERLY LEGAL ADVISOR OF THE MINISTRY. DR. MANRIQUE WAS, OF COURSE, THE MISSION'S PRIMARY HIGH-LEVEL CONTACT IN THE GOE ON NARCOTICS MATTERS AND WAS THE KEY GOE ACTION OFFICER IN THE WAR ON NARCOTICS. HE REMAINS INTERESTED IN THAT EFFORT AND WE BELIEVE WILL CONTINUE TO ACTIVELY COOPERATE WITH US. MANRIQUE'S RESIGNATION WAS APPARENTLY MOTIVATED BY PERSONAL REASONS AND HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS ACTIVIST POSITION ON NARCOTICS.

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4. DR. LEON IS A NATIVE OF QUITO AND IS 43 YEARS OLD. HE WAS JARRIN'S FIRST LEGAL ADVISOR AFTER HE BECAME MINGOV, AND THEN WAS ASSIGNED TO THE COMMISSIONS DRAFTING THE NEW ECUADOREAN CONSTITUTION. AFTER THE COMMISSIONS FINISHED THEIR WORK, HE WAS NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INTERNAL BOUNDARIES, WHICH WORKS IN COOPERATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT IN RESOLVING BOUNDARY DISPUTES. HE IS A PROFESSOR OF LAW AT THE CENTRAL UNIV. IN QUITO AND IS THE SON-IN-LAW OF RAMIRO BORJA Y BORJA A WELL-KNOWN LAWYER AND PRESIDENT OF THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION. LEON IS ACTIVE IN THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT PARTY.

5. ON MAY 18, MAJOR HOMERO LOPEZ WAS REPLACED AS CHIEF OF THE QUITO NATIONAL POLICE NARCOTICS SERVICE (NPNS/INTERPOL) BY MAJOR GUSTAVO GALLEGOS. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, LOPEZ WAS ONE OF OUR MAJOR TARGETS AND HAS BEEN THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK TO EFFECTIVE NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT IN THE QUITO AREA. ALTHOUGH, IN ALL FAIRNESS IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT NPNS COOPERATION WITH OUR NARCOTICS CONTROL DIVISION (NCD) IN IMPLEMENTING OUR PRO-AGS HAD IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY EVEN IN THE WEEKS PRIOR TO LOPEZ' REMOVAL.

GALLEGOS HAS BEEN THE COORDINATOR BETWEEN THE NPNS AND THE NCD AND SOME OF THIS IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN DUE TO HIS INTEREST. WE BELIEVE HIS PROMOTION TO NPNS CHIEF FOR QUITO WILL CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT HERE.

6. ON MAY 28 MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT JARRIN RELIEVED THE COMMANDER OF THE FOURTH POLICE DISTRICT (GUAYAQUIL), COL. OSWALDO NAVARRO RELIX. HE WAS REPLACED BY POLICE GEN. CRISTOBAL CANIZARES DIAZ. CANIZARES IS KNOWN TO THE MISSION AND WE BELIEVE THAT HIS ASSIGNMENT COULD SERVE TO IMPROVE NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT IN GUAYAQUIL. WE DO NOT YET KNOW WHETHER NAVARRO WAS RELIEVED SPECIFICALLY FOR SHORTCOMINGS IN THE NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AREA OR CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR OTHER REASONS.

7. ON JUNE 6 VADM RENAN OLMEDO, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, CALLED IN THE CHARTE TO SEEK OUR COOPERATION IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD. HE INDICATED THAT HE HAD INFORMATION THAT THE ECUADOREAN TANKER AND CARGO FLEET, RUN BY THE GOE-OWNED FLOPEC, WAS CARRYING NARCOTICS TO THE U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES. HE FORCEFULLY DECLARED HIS INTENTION TO STOP THIS TRAFFIC AND ASKED FOR THE CLOSE COOPERATION OF THE MISSION IN THAT EFFORT. THIS VOLUNTARY EXPRESSION OF CONCERN AND INTENTION TO ATTACK A TRAFFICKING PROBLEM IS REFRESHING AND PERHAPS INDICATES THE NAVY'S CONCERN ABOUT THE PROBLEM.

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8471
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 3925

8. COMMENT: WHILE SOME TIME MUST PASS BEFORE THE IMPACT OF THESE RECENT CHANGES ON THE NARCOTICS EFFORT BECOMES APPARENT, SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS CAN BE MADE EVEN AT THIS EARLY DATE. THE LOPEZ REMOVAL AND DISMISSAL OF JUDGES ARE THE MOST POSITIVE SIGNS TO DATE THAT THE GOE IS SERIOUS ABOUT ITS WAR ON NARCOTICS. AT THE SAME TIME, MANRIQUE'S RESIGNATION COULD HURT THE EFFORT. HIS DEPARTURE HAS HAD NO APPARENT IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON INTERDICTION EFFORTS BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO SPECULATE ON POSSIBLE LONG-TERM EFFECTS. WE HOPE HIS SUCCESSOR PURSUES THE WAR WITH THE SAME VIGOR, AND THAT MANRIQUE HIMSELF WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN IT.

9. WE SHOULD ALSO NOTE THAT THERE ARE OTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE INCREASED ACTIVITY OF THE SUPREME COURT IN REMOVING CORRUPT JUDGES. ONE POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE MILITARY, WHICH RECENTLY INSTITUTED WHOLESALE CHANGES IN THE SUPREME COURT, IS CONTINUING AN EFFORT TO INSURE A SYMPATHETIC COURT STRUCTURE IN ANTICIPATION OF THE COMING ELECTIONS. WHATEVER THE REASONS, THE RESULTS FOR OUR NARCOTICS EFFORT ARE POSITIVE, AND WE INTEND TO ENCOURAGE THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT IN HIS AGGRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST SUCH JUDGES.
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10. THIS SLOW ACCRETION OF POSITIVE ACTION ON THE NARCOTICS FRONT IS NOT AS SATISFYING AS A RADICAL CHANGE WOULD HAVE BEEN. YET IT IS INDICATIVE THAT ADMIRAL POVEDA IS TAKING HIS COMMITMENT SERIOUSLY AND IS MOBILIZING THE GOE ON THIS FRONT. WHILE THIS HIGH-LEVEL DEDICATION IN MANY AREAS IS ENCOURAGING, WE STILL MUST FACE THE FACT THAT WE ARE FORCED TO WORK WITH AN INSTITUTIONAL POLICE AND CUSTOMS POLICE STRUCTURE WHICH IS HIGHLY RESISTANT TO CHANGE IN THIS AREA AND WHICH REMAINS SUBJECT TO STRONG TEMPTATION TO LET NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT SLIDE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER HIGH-LEVEL DEDICATION CAN OVERCOME THIS INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA AND CORRUPTION.
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